

THE GOVERNANCE OF EMPIRE

BEING

Suggestions for the Adaptation of the British Constitution to the
Conditions of Union among the Overseas States

BY

W. D. LIGHTHALL, K.C., F.R.S.C.
OF MONTREAL

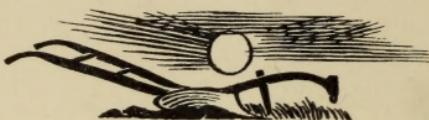
*(Essay receiving Honorable Mention in the "Standard of
Empire" Competition, London)*

With a Note on the name "IMPERIAL CONFERENCE", and a proposal for
a permanent "AMERICANADIAN CONFERENCE".



PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
MONTREAL
1910

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PREFACE

The London “**Standard of Empire**” recently concluded its great essay competition on the subject of “The Governance of Empire”, which is expected to have considerable effect on the shaping of the Imperial Conferences. Although the prize of One Hundred Guineas was a large one, it was understood that many of the vast number of essays sent in were not influenced by the prize as such. Judges were the Earl of Jersey, Lord Northcote, Sir Charles Tupper, E. J. Duncan, L. S. Amery, Editor of the “*Standard*”, and Mr. Dawson, Editor of the “*Standard of Empire*”. The views of the judges were, of course, all highly Conservative. The prize was won by Mr. Reginald V. Harris, barrister, of Halifax, N. S., and among the first twenty honorably mentioned were Rev. Canon Duckworth and J. Castell Hopkins, of Toronto, and W. D. Lighthall, K. C., Montreal. The essay of the latter, which was not originally written for the Competition, but sent in by request over the nom-de-plume “Reason”, is here given. The principal point on which it differs from the other leading essays so far published is that it takes the ground that the ordinary statements of the British Constitution require remodelling and some of its institutions changing, on account of the great difference between a scattered Empire and a compact Kingdom.

The Governance of Empire

By W. D. Lighthall, K. C., F. R. S. C.

No nobler political problem was ever presented to men than that which to-day appeals to the children of Britain throughout the world,—how to preserve our great and rapidly-changing Empire. The difficulties arise from development and therefore the solution cannot consist in hanging back: it must be a forward, constructive, solution. Of the white population, now rapidly running up towards sixty millions, one third will soon be found outside the original Islands. Canada alone will contain eight millions in 1911 and easily sees its way to at least a hundred millions in a century. The essential fact is that those portions of the British people possessing Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada, have grown naturally into sister nations of the United Kingdom, and hence the old forms that purport to concentrate all authority in the Mother Parliament are outgrown and corresponding obligations and responsibilities are thrust upon the Over-seas children. This has been formally recognized in the Imperial Conference of 1907 which thus became a fresh constitutional starting point. The views and institutions of the new peoples have therefore to be met, and the autonomy of their national organizations has to be preserved. At the same time what is due to the dignity and historic precedence of the Motherland must be made place for and her burdens lifted. But above all stands the great necessity of workability in the form of the union,—harmony in its political mechanism, progressiveness and effectiveness in its action, and a warmly fraternal sentiment. Unless such a constitution can be devised—which fortunately seems to be in process of accomplishment—the alternative is inevitably a gradual disintegration into separate peoples having no more common bond than alliance, and ultimately no permanence of that.

The following considerations seem obvious:—

I. **The Imperial Constitution must be based upon plain and practical reasons**,—and not upon merely traditional constitutional precepts or ideas. We are in an age of direct thinking, and the new nations of the Empire, cut off from traditional rounds and occupied with new formative work, are characteristically direct and practical. For example, in the confusion of old forms and new facts which exists in the present unadjusted situation, many people doubtless consider that the Peers and Bishops of Great Britain are still parts of a Superior Parliament and as such not merely dignitaries of those Islands, but have some kind of overlordship over the Canadian and Australasian peoples. To openly lay such claims to-day would be to shock the common sense and even raise the ridicule of all the Dominions. That jurisdiction is now a matter of obsolete words. To leave such a confusion of forms and facts existing is perilous to the interests of union, to which a thoroughly clear understanding is

supremely necessary. The new constitution must be marked by obliteration of dead forms of the kind, and closeness of statement to workable facts.

11. **The fundamental source and arbiter of the new constitution** must be the conscience of the race. Moral right must be its principle, and this alone the tribunal of its reasoning. Tradition, precedent, commercial advantage, force, and possession, are each too weak as a principle to hold together such widespread peoples; and only a lofty moral impulse can compel that loyalty for which a compact territorial interest was once sufficient in the smaller nation. We are Britons because of duty. Our constitution is that which is right. Whatever revolts the moral sense, no forms nor pretensions can make constitutional. Burke, Junius, Dicey and others have made plain that the arbitership of moral right has been the real root of the British constitution throughout its modern development. But here again the obliteration of obscuring forms and phrases is needful. The language of cryptic jurists and the "conventions of the constitution" have no magic nor use to the citizen of the twentieth century. But we are much in need of what may be termed a Clear Ideal,—a plain, full statement of our Imperial work and aim from the point of view of duty.

III. **The Empire is the common heritage of the Imperial Race.**—It was won by the sacrifices of the whole British people, both at home and abroad, and by those of our common ancestors. It has been maintained by common efforts and burdens. Thus it is in a sacred sense our common possession, and its privileges open of right to all British citizens. By "the Empire" let us understand the whole of its territory, its privileges and its obligations; by "the Imperial Race", the white stocks of the Empire and such other elements or classes as may from time to time be accorded the full governing citizenship. That privilege should be made most rare and honorable and never extended where there is the slightest doubt of fitness and loyalty. (The protected races have rights which, although the most absolute respect is due to them, are of a different category. In this relation the Imperial might be called the Protecting Race). How is this right of common possession to be co-ordinated with the national ownership of, for example, the Australian nation over the territory of Australia? (By the fact that such **national ownership is really a trust for all**. Local autonomy is based upon practical convenience, like municipal autonomy, and never was intended to deprive the Briton from elsewhere of his right to enter and take possession of all the privileges of the local nation. Extreme autonomists, attentive only to the nearer patriotism, sometimes forget the basis of reason and right upon which the claim of Imperial citizenship rests. The word "nation" is in fact ambiguous: we belong at the same time to two national organizations — the local and the Imperial, each having its rightful sphere and claim. "Nationalism" and "Imperialism" are but two concentric circles of the same wheel. Let us hope that the third and outer—"Humanitarianism"—will some day also be capable of organization.

IV. **The Imperial constitution must recognize the self-evident distinctions between the new nations, and those colonies and possessions which are not at that stage of development.** For the time being

it is not practicable to associate the new nations in the details of colonial government which do not directly concern themselves. Later on, their participation will be inevitable.

V. Nothing useful should be lightly changed.—

Proposing the above principles, let us consider the following heads of the subject.

1. The Central Assembly.
2. Its Executive Committee.
3. The Imperial President.
4. The Subjects of Common Action.

1. THE CENTRAL ASSEMBLY. — Public sentiment in the Oversea States has rejected all proposals to put the new wine into old bottles. The idea of electing Canadians and Australians to the Parliament of the United Kingdom has shared the same fate as that to create a new Imperial Parliament, that to govern the Empire through a Committee of the Privy Council; that to establish a Legislative Council, and that to effect a similar end by creating Colonial Peers. All forms and traces of these proposals should be eschewed. On the other hand, the present Imperial Conference is the logical first form of the Central Assembly. Beginning in 1887, as a Jubilee meeting of colonial representatives, conferring concerning certain special subjects and gradually taking shape in 1897, 1902 and 1907, it has now been given permanence and a significant name. It has accepted the two great principles (1) of equality of the self-governing States, and (2) of their autonomous independence, as pillars of the Empire. As a corollary of the latter, the conference does not legislate but confers. (It may be delegated certain powers of legislation in the future.). These principles constitute a sufficient and prudent basis. The Conference has also adopted periodicity of meeting, a place, a chairman, and some important items of administrative sub-organization, such as the Secretariat and the Military Council of the Empire, which latter may be taken to be a part of the same movement. We have here a body which, notwithstanding certain limitations, promises to evolve into a true Parliament and become the greatest assembly in the history of the world. Although it may never accept the bare principle of majority rule, yet in time the delegations of power to those composing it will inevitably be such as to bring about unanimous agreement. Although its subject matter is now limited, its logical reach is over the whole common interests of the Empire. Although its machinery is unmade, we can forecast that it will probably be better and more specialized than the existing Imperial executive. While primacy of honor remains with the Mother country, the claim to supremacy of the mother Parliament has, as noted above, been generously given up in favor of the new system. The principle is not yet in complete working order, — for example a subsidy agreement between the Dominion and its component provinces was recently referred, really as a convenient form, to the Home Parliament for so-called legislation, and the South African provinces now make the same application for the passage of their new constitution. But it is well understood that in the former case the Home Parliament acts by consent as a simply registering body, and that, as the general principle, the same thing applies to the latter case also. The so-called "grant" of powers has in fact become a legal fiction. In the second place the recognition of the autonomy of the States has thrown upon

them the obligation to take up the lines of work formerly borne by the Mother Parliament. It is necessary that the new principles be worked out in all their bearings by the Imperial Conference and elsewhere, with a view to fully replacing the outworn forms by new and direct ones. The charge of registering such constitutional changes and of voicing the general opinion or advice of the Empire thereon, and even of acting as, or appointing, arbitrators among the Imperial States, ought to be functions of the Conference. The very incompletenesses of the process at present point to the necessity of the Conference being set to work out such details. As all the Imperial functions of the Mother Parliament may soon be in fact (if not formally) in process of transfer to the Conference, it is the mission of the latter to discuss them and prepare to take them up in the form of recommendations.

It will, we are confident, be found that any fears of local national autonomists lest the Central Assembly usurp their institutions, are unfounded. The necessity of autonomy is based on the impracticability of legislation at a distance and by those unacquainted with local needs. Autonomy is fully protected by the distinct acceptance of the local parliament as the source of authority. Whatever authority the Conference will exert will be delegated; but the results possible in this way are enormous. A series of co-ordinated legislations by the several States on single points would be so awkward a substitute that authorized Federal legislation will probably eventuate, in carefully defined and restricted spheres. But until the full effects of these grants of legislative power are studied, the conferential form, as the expression of prudent tentativeness, will doubtless be pretty strictly adhered to. The local Parliaments will always have practical control.

The first duty of the present is to perfect the Conference for its task. The meetings should be made annual, with provision for interim action, so as to be in effect perpetual. Its membership should no longer be confined to Premiers. They are too busy to perform the work. In fact their inclusion hitherto has been due to the accident of the Jubilee. Special representatives could easily be appointed, by the governments of the States concerned, who could make a thorough study of what is required and spend the necessary time upon it. The class of men whom such a capacity would attract would produce results of the greatest benefit. Such a class—experienced statesmen at Home and in the Oversea States—already exists in sufficient numbers. The knowledge, experience and ability they would bring together might be expected to gradually make the Conference what it should be. Reasonable rules for arriving at agreements will be invented and endorsed by the constituent governments. Partial agreements also applicable to certain of the governments only, (such as for mutual trade) will be an important sphere. It has been said that the Mother Parliament would be too tenacious of its Imperial powers and privileges to part with any serious share of them and allow itself to be overshadowed by such a body; since the former would in effect become but a local national legislature for the United Kingdom. Probably, on the other hand, the United Kingdom would become so proud of possessing its Imperial Conference in its developed state, and look to it as such a bulwark of common safety, and her public men would so appreciate this sphere for their ambitions that objections would be unlikely to take any serious form.

2. **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**—An Executive Committee will be chosen to carry out the intentions agreed upon. It will be the most important part of the system except the Conference itself. It will meet daily or at call. The Oversea States will be all represented upon it and may divide the functions of state on convenient lines among themselves. It will not be a Cabinet in the ordinary sense, but a consultative, non-partisan, outlook, and executive, council. Since parties will not exist in the Conference, the contrivances of party government will be absent from its action. Its immediate staff will consist partly of men derived from and not merely superficially acquainted with, the Oversea Nations. The Conference and its staff will ultimately require a stately Building suitable to its dignity.

3. **THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENT.**—It is needless to say that feudal forms and ideas regarding monarchy are not generally popular among the new peoples, and with many persons they do real injury. But the respect rightly due to Victoria and Edward VII. give great present strength to the existing institution in its more modern lights. Looking at the question from what Blackstone calls “a rational and sober inquiry”: it has several distinct advantages: — (1) Any kind of ordinary election would be impracticable for the Empire as it stands; (2) it is well known that our immense Asiatic and some other populations attach great importance to the monarchical name and forms; (3) the existing system works satisfactorily. If therefore claims objectionable to democracy, and inflated phrases — “hymns of praise and ascriptions of attributes almost divine to the wearer for the time being of the crown”, (Clement, Canadian Constitution, chapter VI), the proprietary suggestions of the words, “We”, “Our”, “My”, “mere grace”, “royal pleasure”, and so on, be eliminated, and proper safeguards adopted against an unworthy candidate, a hereditary Presidency best fulfils the conditions of this Empire. To these rational considerations should be added of course the ties of historical connection with the nation’s past and those sentiments of personal and clan loyalty which appeal to a large portion of mankind. One of the minor changes which ought to be made is the dropping of the word “subject” and replacing it by “citizen”, as far as the Imperial Race are concerned. The Royal Marriage Act may be cited as another example of the class of anomalies which repel the modern world and might endanger the continuance of this otherwise useful and historic arrangement. Neither is it possible that the local aristocracy — the notables of the United Kingdom — can be associated with the Royal House in the Imperial Constitution. Not only has the House of lords no real standing in Canada or Australia: but to propose the very principle of hereditary office, rank or privilege would wreck a government there immediately, although life honors are natural and popular. This remark implies no reflexion on the British aristocracy nor its desirability for the United Kingdom itself. The duties of the office of the Imperial President would of course be those of the kingship as at present, with the requisite modernizations as far as the service of the Oversea States are concerned.

A branch of this phase of the governance of the Empire is the position of the presidents of the New Nations, or Governors-General. These, being parts of the local governments, will naturally be locally chosen, in place of appointed from England as at present. The appointment of a president not intimately acquainted with the people is

a relic of the Crown Colony condition, only excused by the notion that it is "the last link with Britain." The true link — the Imperial feeling — is what has maintained it and is the real source of binding strength. An Imperial Commissioner would represent the Imperial tie in each State.

4. SUBJECTS OF COMMON ACTION. — The particular subjects discussed in the last Conference included: Constitution of the Conference, Military and Naval Defence, Emigration, Naturalization, Coinage, Imperial Court of Appeals, Preferential Trade and Commercial Relations, Treaties, Statistics, Patents, Mails, Pacific Islands, Fisheries, Permanent Staff and others.

The most pressing subject of all for some years will doubtless be the organization of the Conference itself, as above referred to. That of Imperial Defence brings up the question how the Central Assembly would likely deal with a war. If it were begun by the enemy, all would necessarily unite in defence. If the war were aggressive, the consent of each State would be requisite. Previous agreements would have doubtless settled the conditions. Separate armies and navies, acting in cooperation, may be the first arrangement for military purposes: but ultimately a common navy would seem wise. So would a common diplomatic system. In Finance, the needs (including the cost of the Conference and its staff), may be met first by subsidies from the States, but general Imperial sources of revenue might ultimately be sanctioned. A large question at some time will be the assumption by all the Empire of that portion of the national debt which was incurred for common benefit in times past, and which the population of Great Britain alone carry to-day. Its burden will be a mere trifle to the wealthy Oversea States in the future. Much is being said at present on Preferential Trade as a basis of Imperial Union, and many claims are made that union is impossible without such preference. We cannot agree that Imperial patriotism depends on any such element. The arguments all seem to come from business men connected with manufactures and not from the mass of the people, in Canada, at least. Yet there is no doubt that the possibilities of preferences here and there to one another are worth permanent attention by the Conference with a view to assisting the other and higher elements of mutual interest, — patriotism and regard for world-peace and protection.

The question of Emigration has some phases of very deep importance to be solved. The right of each member of the Imperial Race to move and settle freely throughout the Empire will be a basal principle. The rights of other populations will be proper subjects of regulation — one of the first needs being to run no risk of weakening the control of the Race, and thus of impairing its great work.

Two general principles run through all the subjects of the Conference — unification and standardization. While the autonomous principle will forbid many aspects of unification, some are so necessary that they will doubtless be reached by consent.

The field for standardization, however, is unlimited: the States ought to look forward to standardizing to a very extensive degree, weights, measures, patents, laws, education, professional examinations, statistics, tariffs, coinage, methods of all kinds, and other matters. In fact, the Conference should become a clearing house for all the improvements of civilization.

In putting together the foregoing views I have purposely avoided the previous perusal of the articles in the Standard series on "The Governance of Empire", desiring rather to draw my statements directly from my own experiences, such as they may be, of Canadian thought, life and public business. Since writing, I have had the pleasure of reading all the articles and of particularly admiring those of Sir John Quick, Sidney Low, Sanford Evans, and Sir Lewis Tupper. The plan of the first is interesting as a complete scheme; but Canadian opinion would look with some doubt and perhaps suspicion at (1) its foundation upon an Act of the Home Parliament, (2) its sessions only every five years, (3) its method of voting and (4) the election of its members by popular vote throughout the Empire. The latter method would involve all the objections to an Imperial Parliament and insuperable difficulties in election procedure, platforms, parties and political dangers. The keen and learned remarks of Mr. Sidney Low on the Imperial Conference and what may be expected of it strike me as extremely just. Mr. Evans' system of a Council of Ministers of External Affairs might serve as a temporary form of the Conference, although their duties would naturally lie in other directions, seeing that their presence and attention as local Ministers would be required locally. Nearly all the objections to Premiers as members would apply equally to them. One of the most serious of these objections arises from the difference of seasons between the Northern and the Australian climates.

"REASON".

The Name "Imperial Conference"

The origin of the first Conferences was of course accidental, the Prime Ministers having been called together simply for the Jubilee Celebrations. The idea of a formal Conference belongs apparently to Mr. Chamberlain, in 1897. Much credit is due to the body of persons of whom Messrs. Pollock and Drage, and the Hon. Mr. Lyttelton were the mouthpieces, although their actual proposals were not acceptable. Lord Elgin made a sound chairman and contributed not a little to shape the final result. Doubtless these gentlemen and all the actual delegates, with a few other contributors, such as the former Attorney-General of Canada, Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, and the late Sir Richard Seddon, will take rank in history as the "Fathers of the Imperial Constitution."

As far as I can learn, the direct origin of the name "Imperial Conference" was a proposal to that effect made by me at the public banquet given on the 28th September, 1905, by the Political Economy Club, of Montreal, to the unofficial envoys on Imperial Constitution, Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Geoffrey Drage, ex-M. P. A number of prominent men were present, and the guests and some of the group proceeded to Ottawa immediately afterwards to discuss the constitution of the next Conference with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Government. Their proposals were followed up by an invitation from the Balfour

Government, on October 15th, officially proposing an Imperial Council, a Secretariat and an "Imperial Commission" of "experts" on the lines of Sir Frederick's mission. An account of the latter, together with my objections to the use of the word "council", and my own proposals, will be found in an article entitled "Imperial Organization," in the Canadian Magazine for December, 1905, (which, embodying the substance of my speech, was written immediately after the banquet and mailed in the early part of October both to the Magazine and to these gentlemen). In the speech the phrase proposing the name—"Call it the Imperial Conference"—was accompanied by the reasons for the use of each of the two words. Identical reasons were used by the Canadian Government in their reply to the Home despatch which they sent on November 15th. In essence they said as follows:—"They entertain with some doubt the proposal to change the name of the Colonial Conference to that of the Imperial Council... As the Committee understands the phrase, a conference is a more or less unconventional gathering for informal discussion of public questions, continued, it may be, from time to time as circumstances external to itself may render expedient, but possessing no faculty of binding action. The assembly of colonial ministers which met in 1897 and 1902 appear to the Committee to fulfil these conditions. The term 'Council,' on the other hand, indicates, in the view of Your Excellency's ministers, a more formal assemblage, possessing an advisory and deliberative character, and, in conjunction with the word 'Imperial,' suggesting a permanent institution, which, endowed with a continuous life, might eventually come to be regarded as an encroachment upon the full measure of autonomous legislative and administrative power now enjoyed by all the self-governing colonies. The Committee, while not wishing to be understood as advocating any such change at the present time, incline to the opinion that the title 'Imperial Conference' might be less open to the objections they have indicated than the designation proposed by His Majesty's Government."

Let me add that in the beginning of 1907, I was able by letters to obtain the general adoption of the name "Imperial Conference" in place of "Colonial" by the Daily Chronicle and most of the London press, and this general popular adoption made easy its official recognition by the Conference itself in April. I trust I am not acting unduly in recording the above facts.

W. D. LIGHTHALL.

Montreal, July 9th, 1907.

An Americanadian Conference.

The second word in the title may not look so enigmatic after it is explained that it was coined, and used with acceptance, on a certain occasion to express the close relationship which exists in many of their interests and movements between the two peoples separated—or rather delimited—by the frontier line between Canada and the United States. The similarity of interests under consideration on that occasion was in municipal institutions; but the same interlacing process, founded on identity of language and origin, covers so nearly all the branches of their activity,—migrations to and fro, social intercourse, intermarriages, a vast mutual commerce, political and educational institutions as well as municipal, literature, journalism, religious thought, reform waves, and many others, that descriptive phrases are superfluous: the analogies are evident to all. It is possible to at once lay down the **PROPOSITION THAT THE GREATEST EXTERNAL CONCERN OF EACH OF THE TWO NATIONS — CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES — IS THE MAINTENANCE OF A PERMANENT GOOD UNDERSTANDING WITH THE OTHER.** I think a moment's thought will show even to the American who thinks his country too powerful to stand in such a position towards a people numbering only eight millions (at present), that the proposition is correct. The more he studies it, the more he will become convinced that it is true. Canada has only one neighbor. The United States have only two, and of the two their relations with Canada are very much the more extensive. Statisticians now recognize that the vast Canadian territory possesses at least two thirds as much natural resources as the United States and can support a correspondingly large population of desirable races; while economically speaking, the flow of new development in Canada is intimately associated with the streams of development in the States. When immigration ceased to find free farming land in the latter, it turned its forces towards the free lands to be found over the border. When American forests are found to be failing, the Canadian woods are looked to to fill the deficiency. Wheat, iron, fish, asbestos, and other products tell, and will increasingly tell, the same story. The rate of growth of population is now, and must increasingly be, far greater than that south of the line, for some generations. Ten millions will soon be the population of Canada, twenty is a figure within early reach; fifty may be safely hazarded before as many years elapse. Such numbers and resources alone make a neighbor worth counting with, not to mention other considerations, such as the very large trade per capita and the close relations of Lake and New Zealand ports and other centres with Canada. The dangers of a serious breach of good course patent. At one time there were those who looked to the adjustment of the relations between the two peoples by Annexation, but since the successful growth, during recent years, of the fascinating ideal of a distinct nationality in Canada, Annexation has become a dead issue. The nature of the now full-fledged national idea among the Canadian people is the thing which doubtless most requires ex-

planation in connection with the matter. We have found that the usual affairs of our people can only be known to, and managed by ourselves. This has perforce made us into a national organization. We have, as members of the historic League called the Empire, an Imperial patriotism also, but the two are usual thought of quite separately and dealt with to a large extent separately. It should not be hard for Americans to understand our love of independant existence, and of the hopes it offers of developing ideas and constructing institutions on new and better lines. If Canada can avert some of the evils of American public life while gratefully adopting its best lessons, the experience would be beneficial to both peoples. This national development may as well be regarded amicably and honorably, as it is by many thoughtful students of political life, such as ex-President Eliot of Harvard. Fate, then, having decreed, and most wisely, that the English-speaking population of North America should pursue its ideals in two national organizations in place of one, somewhat as it decreed that the thirteen colonies were not to merge their legislatures in one general parliament — it is not necessary to conclude that they should stand altogether apart.

The question now becomes: **What is the best means of maintaining a permanent good understanding between them?** I think it is a tie, and that such a tie is neither inconceivable nor impracticable. We have had sporadic Commissions for frontier delimitation, for deep water-ways, reciprocity, and fisheries; some imperfect concerted action for preserving Niagara Falls; a few customs and immigration understandings; a little comity of Courts; as well as the great treaties. It is not too much to say that scarcely any of these has been perfectly satisfactory. Chicago is drawing off St. Lawrence water into the Mississippi, the Erie Flats canals on the other hand are in the territory of Canada; the preservation of the Niagara Falls rests on little more than ill-concerted popular whim; warships are being prepared on the lakes (under the guise of training ships) in disregard of the Treaty of 1818; criminals postpone their extraditions for long periods; rejected immigrants slip across the border; a tariff war is constantly in action; powderam steals are mutually projected on the common rivers; fishermen invent one embroilment after another; and the wonder is that things have not gone worse. Sporadic understandings then have been a failure. A general clearing up of outstanding questions is said to be now in process by means of ordinary diplomatic channels, but it is not founded on any settled principle or accepted understanding.

I have ventured to propose the permanent establishment of an annual general conference between the two nations, which might be known as "**THE AMERICANADIAN CONFERENCE**", for the regular and constant adjustment of the whole of the questions which arise. Whatever might be its form or composition (it could not be a legislative body, nor directly elective), it should have for basis a condition of good understanding and alliance; which should be considered so permanent and settled as to form a species of union. The two ought no longer to regard each other as foreign, but as kin. And as we Canadians, apart from our natural patriotism, are tied by every bond of fraternal loyalty and gratitude to our kinsmen of the British Empire, it would imply that, although hingeing on us, the understanding be, to that extent, extended to those kinsmen. I know that ques-

tions and prejudices at once occur to the minds of many persons on both sides of the line. There are Canadians who think it would mean invasion by Standard Oil, the Yellow Press, the political boss, and Judge Lynch. There are Americans who imagine that our so-called monarchy is a serious clog to our democracy and progress, and might be so to such a movement. I only mention this notion to reply that in the old sense monarchy has passed away in the British Empire, and exists to-day as a convenient form of presidency, absolutely subservient to the popular will, and keeping up a few historical forms indicative of continuity.

The matter now under discussion is a matter primarily for the Canadian people and the American people. If they agree, the rest of the Empire will be well satisfied. To some Canadians the rapprochement between the two peoples would smell of Annexation, and thus of the death of that national ideal which so deeply attracts us. But this does not follow. There are all kinds of Bunds, ententes and alliances in the world. The Hellenic States had their Panhellenic Council. Spain and Austria were bound together under Charles the Fifth, without a whit lost of national autonomy, and that in a crude age. The Dreibund in Europe has worked very effectively for purposes of war. The British Empire itself is solving its scattered problems by the principle of a great periodic family Conference. Why not, in these days of rapid communication, of reason, of enlightenment, the nearby and practical matter of an Americanadian Conference, and with it a united English-speaking world, irresistible and beneficial as we all know it will be when petty distrusts and foolish harkings back to dead pasts shall have given way to harmony, friendship, reason and sensible business.

